

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-27 (Canceled).

28. (New) A storage unit for storing elongated products comprising at least two flexible members, equipped with supports for said products, extending and moving along respective parallel paths and defined by a plurality of driving wheels wherein:

- said supports project laterally from a corresponding one flexible member of said at least two flexible members; and

- in each of said paths in proximity to at least one driving wheel of said plurality of driving wheels a transfer member is positioned, which receives said products from the supports located on a branch of the corresponding one flexible member upstream of said at least one driving wheel and transfers the products to the supports located on the branch of said corresponding one flexible member downstream of said at least one driving wheel with respect to a direction of feed of the flexible members along the respective parallel paths, so that the products follow a trajectory that by-passes said at least one driving wheel.

29. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said at least two flexible members are continuous and extend along closed paths.

30. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28 or 29, wherein each of said supports has two opposed resting surfaces to receive and hold said products on one or other of two sides of each of said supports.

31. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein each of said supports projects from a same side of a respective one of said flexible members.

32. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said supports extend at least partially approximately according to a plane parallel to a plane on which the corresponding one flexible member lies.

33. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 32, wherein said supports project from the corresponding one flexible member in a direction so that the supports are oriented radially towards an axle of the at least one driving wheel with which said transfer member is associated.

34. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said transfer member comprises a transfer surface intersecting a trajectory of the supports carried by the branch upstream and the branch downstream of said at

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least one driving wheel, and inclined from a top thereof downwards and from the branch upstream towards the branch downstream to cause transfer of said products by gravity, said paths extending along planes that lie substantially vertically.

35. (New) Storage unit as claimed claim 29, wherein each of said closed paths is defined by at least a first series and a second series of driving wheels with fixed axle, and by a first series and a second series of driving wheels with moving axle carried by a moving unit between the first series and the second series of driving wheels with fixed axle, and wherein a respective transfer member carried by said moving unit is associated with each of said driving wheels of said first series of driving wheels with moving axis.

36. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 35, wherein each transfer member transfers the products from one branch to the other branch of the corresponding one flexible member, tangent to the driving wheels with moving axle with which said transfer member is associated.

37. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 35, wherein the supports are mounted projectingly on the corresponding one flexible member so that in an area where

the corresponding one flexible member is driven around the driving wheels with moving axle the supports are oriented radially towards the moving axle of said driving wheels.

38. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 35, wherein each wheel of the first series of driving wheels with moving axle is coaxial to a corresponding wheel of the second series of driving wheels with moving axle.

39. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said transfer member is adjustable in position in respect of the at least one driving wheel with which the transfer member is associated.

40. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said supports comprise laminar components rigidly secured to the corresponding one flexible member.

41. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 40, wherein each of said supports has an end secured to the corresponding one flexible member and a portion forming resting surfaces for said products, and is bent between said end and said resting surfaces to distance the resting surfaces from the plane on which the corresponding one flexible member lies.

42. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said flexible members comprise chains.

43. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 42, wherein each of said supports is rigidly secured to a respective link of the chains.

44. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 37, wherein pairs of the driving wheels with moving axle coaxial with each other are supported by a single hub, mounted rotatably on a shaft carried by said moving unit, and wherein said hub has, in an axially intermediate position between one of the pairs of driving wheels supported on the single hub, an annular groove.

45. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 35, wherein the driving wheels with moving axle have a larger radius than the driving wheels with fixed axle.

46. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein a section bar to guide and hold the products resting on said supports extends around at least some of said driving wheels.

47. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein said flexible members move along the respective parallel paths in a same direction, transferring the products from a loading station to an unloading station, the supports located along a portion of the paths between the loading station and the unloading station being loaded with

said products, and the supports located along the paths from the unloading station to the loading station being empty.

48. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 28, wherein at least one guiding sliding block is disposed between at least two parallel branches of each of said flexible members in contact with said two branches.

49. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 48, wherein said at least one guiding sliding block is disposed in a vicinity of one or more of the driving wheels, in contact with said parallel branches of the corresponding one flexible member.

50. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 48, wherein said guiding sliding block has a width greater than a distance between said two parallel branches of the corresponding one flexible member, said branches being divaricated by said at least one guiding sliding block.

51. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 48, wherein one of said at least one guiding sliding block is disposed at the driving wheels of said first series and said second series of driving wheels with fixed axle, in contact with the two branches of the corresponding one flexible member in contact with a respective driving wheel with fixed axle.

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52. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 35, wherein said moving unit carries respective guiding sliding blocks disposed between parallel branches of a driving member between two adjacent driving wheels carried by said moving unit.

53. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 48, wherein said at least one guiding sliding block has sides with bevels.

54. (New) Storage unit as claimed in claim 53, wherein said sides have parallel rectilinear portions extending between said bevels.